

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 005509

SIPDIS

SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/09/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: PDI SELECTS ANTONIO NAVARRO AS PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE

REF: BOGOTA 4467

Classified By: Charge Milton K. Drucker, Reasons: 1.4 B & D.

¶11. (SBU) Summary: On June 2, the leftist Polo Democratico (PDI) selected former M-19 guerrilla and current Senator Antonio Navarro Wolff as its Presidential nominee at the party's national convention. Despite much-rumored tacit support of Bogota Mayor "Lucho" Garzon for second-place finisher Samuel Moreno, Garzon did not meddle in the convention, preferring to remain focused on the 2010 Presidential contest. Talks continue with Alternativa Democratica (AD), a fellow leftist party led by Senator Carlos Gaviria, regarding a potential coalition for the 2006 elections. With or without the coalition, however, the left at present cannot challenge Uribe in a head-to-head contest. End Summary.

¶12. (U) The PDI held its national convention in Bogota June 1-2, and its roughly 1000 delegates selected Senator Antonio Navarro Wolff as the party's 2006 Presidential nominee. Navarro attained 530 votes, while rivals Samuel Moreno (current PDI head and Senator) and former Tolima governor Guillermo Jaramillo attained 344 and 115 votes, respectively. Press has speculated that Bogota Mayor Luis Eduardo "Lucho" Garzon suffered a defeat with Navarro's election, as Garzon's son, a likely candidate for Bogota City Council, had openly supported Moreno.

¶13. (U) Prior to the convention, the PDI had received prominent press coverage regarding its about-face in supporting the GOC on implementing legislation for Presidential reelection and associated language on level playing field guarantees for the opposition under a reelection scenario. Navarro and Representative Gustavo Petro convinced the majority of PDI members of Congress to support the GOC over the objections of Moreno and a handful of colleagues. The GOC offer to provide each Presidential nominee a large sum of campaign money up front had swayed Navarro and Petro. Beyond financing, it was also seen as a move by the PDI to sideline the Liberal party (PLC) on the same issue and declare itself the opposition party with whom the GOC must contend. (Note: Reftel details federal electoral rules and the existing campaign finance scheme, which is based on private donations and subsequent partial GOC reimbursement of campaign expenses based on votes attained. End Note.)

¶14. (C) Garzon inner circle members, in particular private secretary Edgar Ruiz and lifelong confidant Daniel

SIPDIS

Garcia-Pena (protect), in regular conversations with Deputy Polcouns, have stressed that Garzon has consistently maintained a "hands off" posture with regard to the PDI and its internal decision-making processes. Garzon most recently told visiting WHA/AND Director that he continued to advocate a moderate political posture for the PDI and that he was concerned about radical leftist discourse in the hemisphere, in particular Venezuela's Chavez and Uruguay's Vazquez.

¶15. (C) Comment: Navarro's victory over Moreno comes as no surprise, as the former is a much better known political figure nationally. The divided vote of the delegates mirrored the party's divisions over accepting the GOC's reelection implementing legislation package. It remains to be seen whether the PDI and AD will join up for 2006, as neither side wants to cede in terms of its own candidate leading any coalition. PDI is larger but AD has a stronger political machine. Navarro is talking to two-time Presidential nominee Horacio Serpa of the PLC, with whom a deal could be struck, especially if Serpa decides to break with the PLC in the coming weeks. However, the majority of prominent PLC members, including former President Cesar Gaviria, party head Juan Cristo, and Presidential nomination contenders Rafael Pardo, Enrique Penalosa, and Rodrigo Rivera, strongly favor the PLC going it alone in the 2006 contest. Provided reelection passes the Constitutional Court, President Uribe remains the clear front-runner for 2006. Garzon, meanwhile, is focused on effectively governing Bogota as his entry card to the 2010 Presidential sweepstakes, and is reaching out to centrist elements beyond the PDI in hopes of becoming a broad left/center-left/center candidate at that time. End Comment.

16. (U) Biographical notes: Navarro, a member of the influential First Committee of the Senate (constitutional and legal affairs), was a leading member of the former M-19 guerrilla movement. He ran for President in 1990 and 1994 and served a term as mayor of Pasto, Nariño Department, in the mid 1990s. Navarro also was a delegate to the 1991 Constitutional Convention. In the 2002 Senate elections, he was the second-highest vote getter nationwide. Moreno, grandson of a Colombian president, is the current head of the PDI. He sits on the Seventh Committee (labor and social issues) of the Senate. He earned a master's degree at Harvard's Kennedy School in the late 1990s.

DRUCKER